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WEBWEEK
The Newspaper of Web Technology and Business Strategy • www.webweek.com
Volume Two, Issue Sixteen • October 21, 1996 • $5.00

Program Does Direct File Transfers via HTTP

By Bill Roberts

THE GRYPHON GROUP shipped Acquire, a server-based tool that uses the Hypertext Transfer Protocol to move files to and from Web sites, eliminating the need for FTP or e-mail attachments.

With any browser, the user can point and click to upload and download files directly from a site. The product, which was demonstrated at the Netscape Developer's Conference last week, is more secure than FTP because files are encrypted and transferred using any browser that supports Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption. Acquire also manages access control to the files.

"They have created a nice front end," said Jerry Michalski, an analyst and managing editor at the Release 1.0 newsletter in New York City. "They have some nice, elegant code that uses the Web in a way that people want to with files. I have not seen anyone else doing this."

New York-based Gryphon Group L.L.C. began as a custom development firm with several Fortune 500 companies as customers. Now it is turning several common gateway interfaces (CGIs) it custom-built into products for the Web.

Acquire is the first of these to ship. A folder structure application, a threaded discussion application, and an authentication application using public key certificates to control Web site access are among the others to be shipped by year's end, said Sean Lucey, Gryphon's president.

Early adopters of Acquire include a number of publishing companies, where text-and-graphics files are frequently transferred among workers in different offices.

Bill Millard, editor of "21st C: The World of Research at Columbia University," said his magazine is using Acquire to transfer files from writers and editors at the magazine to Web page designers in another office, who convert the material to HTML text.

Another user is WOWFactor Inc., a Web-based business that offers content to women and hosts several sites aimed at that audience. Margaret McGillin, the president, said her company uses Acquire to transfer entire Web sites from the designers to WOWFactor, where they are hosted.

The product enables WOWFactor's six full-time and nine part-time employees, who work in various locations, to easily file and retrieve content submissions to a central repository. "It's our community filing cabinet," McGillin said.

The product, which sells for a retail price of $249.95, currently supports Unix. Versions for Windows NT, Windows 95 and the Mac OS are scheduled to be available before the end of the year. Acquire can be downloaded from the Gryphon Group's Web site.

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